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LETTER DATED 27 NOVEMBER 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Please find enclosed the text of a statement I had intended to make to the Security Council regarding the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Prevention Deployment Force pursuant to Security Council resolution 1058 (1996) (S/1996/961) (see annex).

I would appreciate it if the present letter and attached statement could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Denko MALESKI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Macedonia
to the United Nations

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Annex

Address to be given by the Permanent Representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the United Nations to the Security Council on 27 November 1996

Allow me to congratulate you on your presidency and to state that the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP), the first preventive mission of the United Nations, is one of the Organization's big successes. The secret of this success is simple: a Government determined to preserve peace and an international organization willing to help have worked very closely for a common cause.

The dominant voice in the Republic of Macedonia has been the voice of reason and tolerance. Although living in a region where ethnic hatred has caused several wars in the course of the last four years, we have preserved the principles of common humanity to which we all belong regardless of ethnic origin. Contrary to the practice of demonizing national minorities, we have repeatedly pointed to the long history of common life between them and the Macedonian people. The policy of peaceful self-determination that has guided us to independence has preserved our good relations with all the former Yugoslav Republics. Today we have full diplomatic relations with the members of the former federation and have developed high levels of economic cooperation through the creation of free trade zones. We have also established relations with all our neighbours, thus contributing to peace and stability in the Balkan region.

We are grateful to all those in the international community who gave us a helping hand in achieving what many said was impossible in the Balkans: independence through negotiation and ethnic tolerance through the development of democratic institutions.

The presence of United Nations soldiers on our borders has been a manifestation of the Organization's support for the territorial integrity of the Republic of Macedonia. It has also given us the time to start creating a credible defence force after the withdrawal of the Yugoslav army.

The new territorial status quo that came into being with the dissolution of the former Yugoslav federation is still very unstable. The wounds of recent wars on the territory of three of the five new States are still very deep, and it will take time for them to heal. That is the main reason for the need for foreign military presence in the region at this point in time.

The Republic of Macedonia which achieved its independence through peaceful self-determination, also needed assistance. Together with the United Nations we opted for a preventive force, because, if Macedonia is regarded as a potential source of instability, it is not that as a State it endangers anyone but because of potential political and territorial designs of others towards its territory and people.

Ethnic hatred has plunged the region into war several times in the course of the twentieth century, but the power of this historical continuity must not

be exaggerated. This century has also been marked by the advance of justice and democracy in the world, while in the Balkans the long periods of peaceful life of different ethnic and religious groups by far outlast the short outbursts of violence. The way to put an end to these outbursts in the coming century is through respect for international legal codes of behaviour among the new States and the development of those new States into democratic and civil societies. This is the major task that we are facing now. Alas, it is a task that demands time.

Today the Security Council is to decide on the future of the UNPREDEP mission in Macedonia. The mission has contributed greatly to the stability of the southern Balkans. My Government is of the view that the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force should be extended for another six months and that any reduction would have a negative impact on its effectiveness.

The Security Council should not rush to decisions that may later cause regret. A long and ugly war in the region has just ended, but that does not mean that the behaviour of States, ethnic groups and individuals has immediately changed. The dominant state of mind in the Balkans is still aggressive.

The Balkans need time to adjust to the new facts of life: to the new territorial status quo, to the imperative of interstate cooperation to the rule of law, to democracy and human rights.

The Balkans need time to adjust to peace. The United Nations should follow closely the pace of that adjustment, making decisions accordingly.